

United States Department of Agriculture



Rural Development

Community Programs

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Success Story

April 2003
CP-2003-1

Plaquemines Parish



Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony in Belle Chasse, Louisiana

A ceremony dedicating the Belle Chasse Academy was held Friday, March 28, 2003, at the Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base New Orleans in Belle Chasse, Louisiana. The academy's board of directors welcomed many visitors and dignitaries to this landmark occasion.

"Today, we are celebrating new educational opportunities for students in the Plaquemines Parish/New Orleans area," said John Schwab, chairman of the Belle Chasse Academy Board of Directors. "We have nearly 700 students enrolled this year, with a projected future capacity of 900 students."



USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program funded construction of this unique school. "This is a one-of-a-kind school—the only charter school ever built on a military installation," said Michael B. Taylor, Louisiana Rural Development State Director. "Rural Development is proud to be a part of it." Rural Development invested over \$13 million in guaranteed loan funds to the Whitney National Bank from the Rural Housing Service Community Facilities Program to construct this school.

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"One-of-a-kind school . . ."





Opened to students in August 2002, the Belle Chasse Academy is already having a positive impact on the educational system in Plaquemines Parish. With construction of 525 additional units of housing at the Naval Air Station, the parish educational system did not have the capacity to accommodate the additional students. Today's enrollment of 700 students in kindergarten through eighth grade dramatically eases the student overload.

Rural Development's Community Facilities Program is making a BIG difference in this community!

To find out more about Rural Development's Community Facilities Program, visit our web page at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/cf/cp.htm>

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Belle Chasse Academy is a two-story, 90,000-square foot, public charter school with 40 classrooms, resource rooms, a gymnasium, cafeteria, media center/library, and youth activities center.

The school offers a basic curriculum in language arts, reading, mathematics, science, history, music, and art. Instruction is supplemented with a foreign language and physical education curriculum.

The school stresses the tenets of high character, integrity, morality, and civility. It offers pre- and after-school programs and a specialized counseling program to deal with the specific needs of a military dependent child.